

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

DISTANCE LEARNING THROUGH INDEPENDENT STUDY DURING THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR



What's this new independent study option?

- › Last year all schools had “distance learning” because in-person school was not safe. This year, schools are offering “independent study” for families that don't feel safe sending their students to school. It's probably going to be different than what you had last year.
- › If you (the parent or guardian) decide that your child's health would be put at risk by going back to school in-person, your child can take independent study this year.
- › Almost all districts offer independent study, but if yours does not, they should help you sign a transfer form so your child can take independent study in another district.
- › Independent study is voluntary. School staff cannot force you to enroll your child in independent study. You should ask a lot of questions and decide for yourself if independent study is the right option for your child.

What's independent study like this year (2021-22)?

- › Independent study school days are different from in-person instruction. The school week depends on grade level. Every school will do it differently, but they must provide at least:

TK-3	Daily live instruction and independent work
4-8	Daily live interaction with school staff (might not be with a teacher), weekly live instruction, and independent work
9-12	At least weekly live instruction and independent work

- › Your child might not have access to extracurricular activities, like sports or student clubs.
- › Your child might not interact with other students.
- › Your high school child should get access to all the classes they need to graduate and apply to CA public universities (UCs and CSUs).
- › Your child should get access to technology they need to participate in independent study, like laptops or internet access.
- › Your child should still receive additional services like special education, English learner services, resources for foster youth or houseless students, and others.

You've thought hard about it and would like to enroll?

- › Ask the district for a “pupil-parent-educator conference” to help you learn more about how independent study might look for your student and whether it is the right fit. You are allowed to invite an education advocate (a lawyer or other supportive person) to join you. You can also ask for a translator if you need one.
 - › Read the [10 Key Questions](#) resource for ideas on what to ask during this meeting.
- › Work with your child and school staff to complete a written independent study agreement before they start the program.
- › Make sure the agreement covers how the district will meet all your child's unique learning needs, like services for a disability or English learner supports.
- › Save a copy of the signed agreement. You can ask for changes later, if needed.
- › Your district's website will have more information on enrollment and who to talk to for help.

Ready to transfer your child back to in-person school?

- › Contact the school district and request the change in writing. The school must transfer your child back to in-person school within 5 or fewer school days, if they were in independent study for 15 or more school days.

For more information on distance learning through independent study, COVID-19 safety protocols, and other back-to-school information, visit <https://youthlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/EnglishIndependentStudyKnowYourRightsLong.pdf> or contact info@youthlaw.org.

